

THREE DAYS' EXPERIENCE AS A STRIKE BREAKER ON THE UNITED RAILWAYS OF SAN FRANCISCO BY ENGLISH WRITER

HIS CAR FREQUENTLY ATTACKED BY STRIKERS

Motorman Did Not Like New Conductor Because He Did Not Graft Enough.

SLEPT UNDER GUARD IN BIG CAR BARN

Men Who Are Attempting to End Struggle by Taking Positions With Company Despise Employers and Each Other.

San Francisco, Cal., July 25.—The interest of the entire country has been centered on the strike-breaking operations in San Francisco. Hitherto no facts have been published as to the methods of Patrick Calhoun in maintaining his army of strike-breakers. The non-union men were housed in car-barns, watchers were placed at the doors and every precaution taken to prevent newspaper men and others from gaining admittance.

In order to study the strike-breakers from the inside, John Dalton Landor, an English writer of some note, secured a job as a conductor. He says in telling of his experience:

His Start.
"My friends tried to dissuade me. They warned me I might be killed should I be caught spying. But I resolved to take the chance. I made up in a shabby outfit and applied for work."

A stern looking man was in charge of the employment office. "I would like a job as a conductor," I said.

"Ever had any experience?" "Yes."

"Where?" "Los Angeles."

"All right. Come around tomorrow morning. Your wages will be \$2.50 per 10-hour day, with board and lodging."

On the following morning I took my first car out of the barn at Turk and Fillmore streets. I had no more idea of the work than the man in the moon, but, as I learned afterward, was in no worse predicament than other conductors on their first day out. I had an "experienced conductor" to give me instructions, but he confessed he had been a shoe clerk all his life.

First Day.
Fortunately for me, however, my motorman was a crack-jack—a real live, professional strike-breaker. He had worked as a strike-breaker in Chicago and St. Louis. He was called "Black Bill." If he had another name no one seemed to know it.

"It takes some nerve to run these cars," I observed to the motorman, as we passed out of the barn and a bunch of union pickets looked daggers at us.

"Nerve," nothing," ejaculated "Black Bill." "If these union men had any nerve I'd be getting \$5 or \$6 a day. But they are trying to win without using violence, and I'm getting starvation wages. I'm going to fly the town unless there is a little blood shed. This kind of life is too tame for me."

Our first day passed very quietly.



JOHN DATHAN LANDOR
As he looks today.

As he looked when he asked for a job.

This is how he appeared in his conductor's uniform.

Nearly all passengers were business people or strangers to the city. I thought the day's work would be uneventful, but just at dark, as we ran past a practically deserted corner, a rock the size of a man's head hit the front platform window even with the motorman's head.

The glass cut "Black Bill's" face and fell in shattered atoms at his feet.

"Bill" picked the big stone from the platform and heaved it back into the street. I expected to hear the motorman curse, but instead he deliberately leaned over the controller with his bleeding face turned in the direction from which the rock had come.

"Whoop 'em up, boys," he shouted. "A few more of them and my wages is up to five bucks a day."

Night in Car Barn.
During my first night in the car barn I gathered a lot of information. The first thing I noticed was that the men appeared to be divided into factions. Members of the two factions did not mingle, but assembled in opposite ends of the barn and occasionally made sneering remarks about the other crowd.

I singled out "Black Bill," my motorman, and asked him what it was all about.

"Those bums in the other crowd," said Bill, "are real, cheap, despised scabs. They get two and a half bucks a day and are signed up for a year."

"My friends here are professional strike-breakers. We entered the employ of the company first and signed 30 and 60 day contracts for \$3.50 a day."

"We don't want anything to do with those 'cheap skates.' When I took a little nerve to run a car they stayed home. But after our nerve oiled the mobs they came sneaking in the back door. If a crowd should mob one of their cars they would chase the white feather and become union men right away. Because of the presence of these 'scabs' as professional strike-breakers have to either sign up for \$2.50 a day when our original contracts run out or give up our profession."

A couple of boxing contests occurred that evening between professional "strike-breakers." A place was cleared in the main driveway for the fighters. It was a curious sight. Two men turned to their backs, each with a knife in an attempt to secure a knockout while the audience, clapping in refiners and crowded about the lighted space, cheered itself hoarse.

In support of Mr. Landor's charge that the San Francisco strike-breakers are incompetent, the motorman in charge of this car allowed the car to attain such a terrific speed going down hill that it jumped the track. The car was completely wrecked.

Comforts of home. The arrangement reminds one of the army, only the soldier has more pleasure, more satisfactory conditions and more privileged than these strike-breakers. It was the sanitary conditions with which a considerable found fault, but neither being conducive to health nor discipline.

"Take-Off."
When I appeared to take out my car on the second morning I found I had a new motorman.

"Black Bill" asked that he be given a car and another explained our new motorman.

"I wonder why," I queried. I thought I had performed my duty well, but very faintly, and I think that I had not yet acquired a complaint to the contrary.

"You didn't give half your rake-out to the mob," answered the new motorman. "That is the worst mistake during a strike you can make. You make a \$2 rake-out of the mob and you are right to expect \$2.50 for not picking. Bill, they say, but make as high as \$12 and \$13 for the share. He makes his conductors take care."

"Aren't the spotters who to him?" I asked, but they are afraid to fire him. He is probably the most popular 'profess' on the job, and he would call all his crowd off. At least that is what the company is afraid of. They hummer him more than anyone else. If I would do what he has done, I would be fired instantly."

"When the company put you on the car, it was their intention to break up Bill's graft."

That day was uneventful, except that my motorman ran into the rear of a bus conducted by union carmen.

Black Bill Quits.
"That was an accident," he declared to me. "I tried to stop as quick as possible, but the wheels slid. Just between you and I, I have got a whole lot to learn about this business."

That evening "Black Bill" said "Goodbye."

"I'm going to clear out tonight," he said. "Think I'll blow back east again. The fun's all over here. Any bum can do the work now. I have made good money, but the company is getting stricter every day. So many bums are coming in, the company is too independent. I couldn't get my old 'cut' back, so I just quit."

Monotonous Life.
When the "professional strike-breakers" ended their entertainment one of the other faction approached and asked for the use of the boxing gloves.

"Go on," replied one of the "professionals," whose scarred face made him look as if he had been through a thousand hard fights. "These gloves weren't intended for bums."

The low-waged men did not seem to care about starting trouble with the "professionals," and I do not blame them, for they were as hard-faced and desperate a crowd of men as I ever saw assembled.

As a general rule, however, life in the barns is a rather monotonous existence, according to the testimony of a couple of strike-breakers. The average dinner consists of boiled beef, potatoes, bread and butter, pudding and some kind of stewed fruit, and there is plenty of everything. The beds are white coats, much the same as those used in army barracks.

But the whole thing is rough and ready and heart-breaking to the average working man used to the sweet comforts of home.

I started out with another new motorman. The first two had appeared reasonably careful, but my latest motorman was a desperado of the worst type. Before starting on his tour of duty he had a car full of passengers and a full tank of gas.

All through the tour he seemed to be in a bad mood. He would be silent for long periods, then he would burst out with a string of profanity. He was a real live, professional strike-breaker.

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Printed posters praising Calhoun are stuck all over the car barns and in many of the cars. Under many of them the strike-breaking motorman or conductor has written his opinion. One with some crude poetical stuff in his makeup has written on one of them:

"If Pat Calhoun was the man in the moon, Some queer things would happen soon. In 'Frisco there'd be no cars nor light. Unless you'd pay Pat twice as much as is right."

"San Francisco needs a few more Calhouns," a motorman has scribbled. "So does San Quentin."

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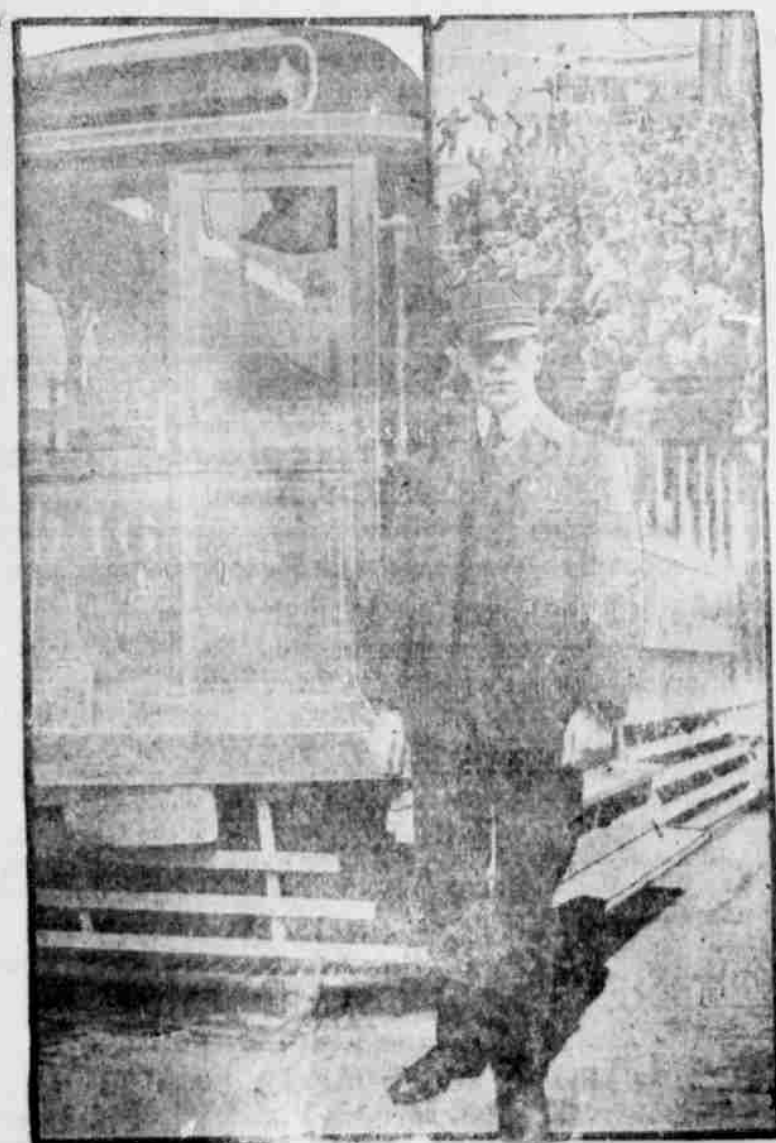
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Mr. Landor in front of his car. In the upper right-hand corner is a snapshot of one of the riotous scenes that occurred during the first days of the great San Francisco strike. Two were shot to death and many injured by armed non-union men, who fired recklessly from the cars into the crowds.